

SHELDON JACKSON MISSIONARY TOUR THRU NE MEXICO

October, 1875

Crack, crack, crack, and our four mules broke into a gallop as we rolled out of South Pueblo, at 5 A.M., bound for New Mexico and "the regions beyond." From Pueblo to Trinidad, a distance of 95 to 100 miles, the road skirted the base of the Greenhorn and Sangre de Cristo (Blood of Christ) range of mountains, crossing a succession of high rolling table lands, with a beautiful little valley and stream every ten or twelve miles. The great rainstorms that were flooding the country from Ohio to Kansas had reached the Rocky Mountains and were breaking against the canyons. The scenic effects of these storms as they rolled in and out of the canyons were simply indescribable.

At Cucharas, an eating station, we found a private supper awaiting us at Elder "Ilkins". The Presbyterian was the first church organized in the village. We continued on and soon after midnight we reached Trinidad, the last village in Colorado. This is largely a Mexican papist town, with a rapidly increasing American population. Situated in the center of an extensive coal and iron basin, together with agricultural and herding interests, it has a promising future. The leading Protestant Church is the Presbyterian under the charge of Rev. John L. Gage. It is a strategic point for that region and should be well sustained.

The heavy black cloud that had passed to the south of us last evening had done its work, and reports began to come in that the road over the Raton Pass had been washed out until it was unsafe. The conductor, unwilling to start out over the road in the dark, gave orders to wait until daybreak. This enabled me after breakfast at 1 o'clock A.M., to lay down on a billiard table and get a couple of hours sleep. At 4 o'clock we were again on our way and shortly pass from Colorado into New Mexico. New Mexico ranks fourth in size among the Territories, an area more than twice the size of New York. Its surface is diversified by mountains, valleys and plains. Its climate, mild, healthy and invigorating. Its low latitude is balanced by its average high altitude, thus preserving it from extremes of heat or cold. Its resources of minerals, grazing, agriculture and horticulture are very great. Its great need to develop and utilize these resources is an American and especially a Christian population.

At 10 A.M., we reach Red River Station. At this point the only other passenger leaves the coach. Starting again a wild and vicious horse is placed on the lead of the coach team. Soon we are thrown across the coach at a sudden halt as the team became tangled up. Straightened out, across gulches and over mounds we go, the coach swaying and bounding from side to side in our mad ride. Though the middle of July we rode all day with two overcoats on.

Late in the afternoon Cimarron, or Maxwell's is reached. Maxwell, recently deceased, was a frontier trapper and guide, the companion of Kit Carson. Marrying a Spanish wife he partly inherited and partly purchased an old Mexican grant of land. This was afterward sold to English capitalist for \$850,000. They attempted to settle it with a colony. A number of neat and pretty cottages were built. Finding an elephant on their hands the English sold out to Hollanders, who failed to impart "Dutch thrift" to the place. But 20 or 30 families remain, the houses that cost \$1,000 to build have been sold as low as \$35.

About 8 P.M. we reach Rayado, a small Mexican village, in a beautiful valley. The pleasantest recollection of the place is the abundance of mountain trout for supper. After supper, placing some hay in the bottom of the coach and spreading the blanket, my bed was made. It was however a sleeping under difficulties. A sudden lurch of the coach would jam my head against the end of the coach, or a jolt toss me up, to come down with a thud, while constrained and cramped positions brought on nightmares. During the night the rain descended in torrents, our lamps gave out and matches failed. At this juncture I was wakened by an angry discussion between the driver and conductor, whether they should venture to go on in the darkness, or stop in the road until daylight. They finally concluded to drive on and run the chance of being thrown over the bank of some washout. Just after light we reached Ft. Union. A few miles farther on we reach the Sappello, to find it a raging torrent, filled with driftwood from the mountains. Numbers of Mexicans were camped on either side waiting for the flood to subside. The conductor rode through to ascertain whether the coach could cross. Safely over the flood came breakfast, after which we were again on our way, plodding through mud and water. Soon after noon we looked down a long, grassy slope upon Las Vegas.

This is the most enterprising town in New Mexico. It has a population of almost 4,000, and is located about seventy-five miles in a southeasterly direction from Santa Fe. Between the two places are the headquarters of the Pecos' River, which afford a fine section for agriculture and the trade of these valleys is divided between the two towns. It is a gateway to about three fourths of the Territory. At this point we have a successful Mission Church and school under the charge of Rev. J. A. Annin and family. The Mission was established under the auspices of the Ladies Board of Missions, of New York City, by Mr. Annin, on the 24th of October, 1869. The following March a little church was organized, with a Mexican Christian for ruling elder. A good church and mission building have been secured and the work is progressing, but the difficulties and dangers through which the mission family have been led would fill a volume. The tragical scenes of Acapulco were well nigh repeated at Vegas. Nor are they yet fully free from the danger of violence at the hands of a fanatical mob. Let them and other laborers in that land be constantly

remembered at the Throne of Grace.

Eating a hasty lunch with Bro. Annin, we were soon again on our way. From Las Vegas to Santa Fe the road is across a succession of wild and rough mountain ranges. After a miserable supper, rolled up in my blankets and went to sleep, to be suddenly roused by a crash, followed by a volley of oaths. In the darkness we had collided with the up coach in a narrow ravine. Both lamps were smashed and wheels and whipple trees securely interlocked. After considerable delay the coaches were extricated from their peril and we were again on our way.

December, 1875

A very pleasant Sabbath was spent with the church at Santa Fe. It was communion Sabbath, and as the small band of disciples gathered around the Lord's table, their privilege seemed doubly sweet, in contrast with the abominations of heathenism and papacy with which they were surrounded. As we left the church four or five Mexicans were waiting to converse with the "Protestant priest". They had walked forty miles over the mountains to get Protestant books in Spanish, and learn more of the new religion. When they have read one set of books, they return them and get others. They are also questioned with regard to their understanding of those they have read.

On Monday, in company with Rev. G. G. Smith, we started for Taos, seventy miles away. Piles of stones holding a small wooden cross lined either side of the road in the neighborhood of the village. These piles marked the spot where a priest met a funeral party coming into the village, or where some one has met a violent death. Three miles from Santa Fe we came upon the top of a dividing ridge, and before us lay the valley of the Bravo Rio Grande Del Norte, the Nile of America. It is 1,800 miles long, flowing hundreds of miles without receiving a tributary. It is fed almost entirely from the melting snows of the Rocky Mountains. It is the sole reliance of the farmer. All along on either side are irrigating canals to the farms. The water is exceedingly turbid, and its annual deposit of sediment upon the land increases its fertility. The view before us had once been an immense plateau, gradually sloping down from the mountains to the river, in some places were round or square topped mounds—an erosion similar to the bad lands of Dakota.

At Santa Cruz's Pueblo we entered the immense adobe church, built in the form of a cross, with an altar in the end of each section of the building. It possessed many large paintings, some evidently imported from Spain, and other ones of home manufacture. The churches are without seats or pews, the worshippers kneeling or sitting on the floor. They are also generally much out of repair. On a bier to the one side of the church was a full sized image of our Savior. This was upon the occasion of certain festivals carried in a procession, and used upon Good Friday to dramatize the crucifixion, for the Roman Catholic priests go through many exhibitions of scriptural scenes. They represent on a stage all the principal events of the lives of the Savior, saints, apostles, and martyrs. Some begin with the creation and end with the judgment. Upon one occasion, during a long dry spell, they had taken out the Virgin Mary several times in stately processions to secure rain, yet no rain came. At length, in their disappointment, they took her out into the streets, took off her costly clothes and gave her a public whipping. Just then a severe thunder and hail storm came up; vivid flashes of lightning played around the and the hail destroyed their garden and crops. Greatly frightened the awestruck multitude hastened to put Mary's clothes on her and prostrate themselves before her in most abject submission.

They also have a hideous wooden image called the Angel of Death, which, upon certain occasions, is placed in a small wagon or cart, and is worshipped by the people men, women and children walking upon their knees, prostrating themselves before it and kissing it, thinking, thereby, to ward off death. The churchyards and especially the church floor, which is of earth, are the favorite burial places, the nearness of the burial, graded by the amount of money paid, nearness to the altar the aim. The Papist Church, away from Protestantism, is a wisely constructed machine for extorting money out of the fears and superstitions of an ignorant people. Baptism, confession, blessings, anointing, burials and masses must all be paid for and at a round price. The weeping friends bring the corpse of their loved one, and set down the bier before the closed gates of the church. Then money is laid upon the corpse. Again and again has the priest been known to look through the door, and if he judged the money was not as much as they could afford to pay, he has refused to open the gate, and nothing is left but for the friends to keep adding money until the capacity of the priest is satisfied and then the gate opens. An ordinary funeral in the church yard will cost \$100 if the family has that much. To be buried in some of their churches costs from \$500 to in the thousands, according to the nearness to the altar and the sanctity of the church. An intelligent American woman, who has lived among them for years, describes the scene as follows; "The corpse is carried on a board or bier (they do not use coffins) to the place of burial. If that of a child it is covered with flowers (the corpse of such are called *angels*). From two to four children walk with the bearers; behind these are other children, who are considered more holy than the rabble that follow. These are followed by four children carrying a richly dressed saint under a canopy. If the family are able to pay for it the priest comes out to meet the procession and sprinkles holy water over the corpse, then in the grave, after which the corpse is slid off the

board into the grave without ceremony. A little dirt is thrown over the body, then men get into the grave, and beat it down solid with a heavy maul. Then more dirt is thrown in and again packed down, and so on until the grave is filled up level with the rest of the floor. The corpses are placed three and four deep in the same spot, and oftentimes the bones of previous burials are thrown up as room is made for the last comer. And all this in Protestant, Christian United States!

In the public plaza was a queer adobe monument, three stories or sections high. It reminded one of the old Druidical remains of England. All along the road we met women on small donkeys, with the men walking at their side, as Joseph and Mary are represented journeying to Bethlehem. In the fields they were plowing their corn with plows made of crooked sticks, and the ox yoke, a stick lashed to the horns of the oxen--plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before as many plows in as many furrows, just as Elisha was plowing when Elijah passed by, and cast his mantle upon him. In the neighborhood of the village women were met carrying large jars of water upon their heads from the spring or river to the house. On and on we rode that hot afternoon, and it did seem as if we would never reach our night's destination. The heat of the day was followed by the chill rainstorm us far into the evening we reached Clark's, and a resting place. Early next morning we were again in the saddle, now in the road, and then following an Indian trail over the mountains and through the canyons, until about noon we came out upon the military road that has been built through a wild, rocky gorge, where the Rio Grande breaks through a range of mountains. As we passed through, a whirlwind drew the water up from the Rio Grande, 100 feet below, and dashed us with spray. About 4 P.M. we were on the summit of the mountain overlooking the plains about Taos. For fifty miles north of us it seemed one vast plain or mesa with a furrow running through it from north to south. That furrow, one-fourth mile wide and one-fourth mile deep, was the canyon of the Rio Grande.

Tired and hot, sore and blistered, late in the afternoon we reached the cheerful mission home of Rev. James M. and Mrs. Roberts, and were soon enjoying the luxury of a cold bath. Mr. Roberts has been fortunate in securing for the church, at a cost of \$1,000, property that cost \$2,600. It consists of five acres on the edge of the town, one block from the public plaza. There was a good adobe dwelling and a substantial picket fence. There is a great need for a suitable school building, which can also be used as a church. His present school is a rented one, 12 x 24 feet, with a few rude wooden benches. But in those few children, in that low room with a dirt floor, we saw in training the future teachers of New Mexico, when her common schools are rescued from the control of the Sisters of Charity. Mr. Roberts is preaching at Taos, El Rancho and at Condobos and that evangelical labor is making very gratifying progress. In addition to the school at Taos, Mrs. Roberts had opened one at El Rancho, with more than usual interest, but just previous to our visit, her horse, a present from ladies in New York, had been stolen so that she could only visit her school once a week. We were both gratified and surprised at the progress made in the mission work by Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, in the midst of great and unusual difficulties. The friends who have stood by them in the past should be encouraged to labor with increasing energy and hopefulness for their mission is bearing fruit. It was a great trial to be unable to stay longer on this interesting field, but the next day we turned our horses' heads Santa Fe-ward arriving on Thursday, thankful for a kind Providence that had kept us from many dangers.

January, 1875

The following day after our arrival at Santa Fe we again took the stage southward. Late in the afternoon we forded the Galistes. On the Saturday previous at this point the coach was washed away, the mail destroyed, and the driver drowned. Soon after we reached Pinos Ranch for a 5 o'clock dinner. Here was a detachment of the Eighth Cavalry on their way to Texas. They had just been paid off, and the whisky sellers and gamblers had followed the paymaster to get the money. At midnight we stopped for a villainous supper. The principal diet in all that region is "chile Colorado." There are several varieties of this fiery dish; one made of beef is called "carne." A more common dish is made of mutton, called "carnero." The flesh is boiled to a pulp, to which is added "chile," which is prepared by rolling red pepper on a stone until pods and seeds are a soft mass. It tastes like red hot iron. It is said that a new beginner on this diet ought to have a copper lined stomach. At daybreak we reached Albuquerque, a city 200 years old, one of the richest and most pleasant places in the Territory. During the war it was the business place for a large region, but since then the business has dwindled down to nothing. Year by year the whole place was under water from the unprecedented rains. A few miles down the bank and the conductor hired a Mexican to ford one branch of the Rio Grande to an island and guide the coach. From the island to the west side, after much delay, we were ferried across.

From time to time we passed through Mexican and Indian villages. The Mexican villages are all after one pattern. A large public square called plaza, around which are grouped the one story adobe houses. A house consists of a series of rooms built around the four sides of a square; doors and windows usually opening upon the yard within, called *placita*. But few windows have glass--a few mica, but the majority a lattice work with a board window shutter. The roofs are made of slightly

sloping poles covered with earth two or three feet thick, floors of the native earth beaten hard, a fireplace in one corner, and a raised bunch of clay around three sides of the room, upon which are piled the blankets used for beds. The majority of the houses are without a chair, table, or bedstead. The fences are also built of adobe mud. There is one large door or gate to the inclosure, admitting the family, donkeys, sheep and goats alike, and a portion of the rooms within the inclosure are used for the stable. Many of the dwelling rooms are neatly whitewashed, and hung with crucifixes and lithographed saints, and swarming with vermin. Everywhere the women are repairing their flat mud roofs, applying fresh adobe with their hands. The roads, worn by the travel of centuries, are lower than the adjacent country, and so were full of water. Under the burning sun of August they stank like the stirring up of a cesspool. At Sabinal we pass another detachment of the Eighth Cavalry on their way to Texas. Tiring mile after mile through mud and water, we passed through some Pueblo villages, among which Isleta was the most prominent. They are farther advanced than any others in school privileges. Socorro, an important Mexican town, was reached at daybreak.

As we were leaving the village we passed a funeral procession. First came a priest with a scarlet dress covered with a white overskirt. At his side, similarly dressed, was a small boy tinkling a bell; a few yards in the rear was another priest swinging a burning censer. Around the latter priest was a motley crowd of men, women, and children, carrying lighted candles, the men and boys with uncovered heads. And behind all were men firing muskets into the air to frighten the devil away from their deceased friend.

All along the country the people were gathering and threshing their grain, for it was the season of harvest. But such harvesting! It would set an eastern farmer in despair. The grain that had been raised in ground plowed with a crooked stick was being reaped with a sickle, and their hay was being cut with a hoe, literally cut off at the roots. As in the days of Ruth and Boaz, men and women were still reaping with the sickle and some gleaning. Others were treading out grain with the sheep, and others engaged in winnowing it. After cleaning out the bulk of the straw with forks, the wheat and chaff were shoveled into woolen blankets, which, by a series of jerks, similar to shaking carpets, tossed their contents into the air, the chaff blowing away, and the wheat falling back upon the blankets. This process can only be carried forward when the wind is favorable, consequently to avail themselves of a favorable wind they work all night. (Ruth iii. 2) A still further process was to lift the wheat in a bucket as high as the head and empty it slowly upon a blanket spread upon the ground. Separated from the chaff the wheat was taken to a neighboring stream by the women and washed in large earthen jars, after which it was spread upon woolen blankets in the sun to dry.

The houses are mostly one story adobe or sun dried brick buildings, built around an open square or court. The roof was flat, covered with earth, and used for various family purposes. (2 Kings xix. 26, Acts x. 9.) Great flocks of goats and sheep covered the plains, and donkeys abound in the villages. The burro, or Mexican donkey, is certainly the poor man's friend. He carries for them their household, their firewood, their grain, merchandise, and even barrels of whiskey. In the fields were occasional lodges (Isaiah i. 8.) as a shelter while watching the melons and grain. Roads for foot passengers and pack animals ran through the grain and corn fields, (Mark ii. 23) and along the unfenced wayside were the graves of the former inhabitants, with a rude board cross and a pile of stones at the feet. (2 Sam. xxiii. 17.) Some of these graves were along trails up the mountain side, so steep that the traveler used his hands as well as feet to ascend. Women carry water in great jars upon their heads and shoulders. (Gen. xxiv. 14.) Skirting along the base of the Sierra Magdalena Mountains we reach Fort Craig to dinner. It is the first tolerable meal we have had for two days.

This post, like the majority of the military posts in Colorado, New Mexico and in Arizona, is without the gospel. The Government nominally provides chaplains to look after the religious welfare of the troops, but in this region they largely confine their labors to the single camp they live in, while a dozen camps, with from one to four companies of soldiers each, in the same district, are left without an religious privileges. The whole chaplaincy system needs overhauling. They should be earnest men who would systematically visit every post in their district as much as the paymaster. At nearly all the posts are some followers of Christ. In their Christian isolation and loneliness they greatly need the sympathy and prayers of God's people. The Union Mission School Association of the East are trying to encourage the Christian people at each post to at least care for the children. Oh, when shall the time come when the American Church, so abundantly able, shall at last give gospel privileges to her own sons and daughters in her own land?

Soon after leaving Fort Craig, we are again ferried over the Rio Grande, reaching Farajo de Fra Christobel about the middle of the afternoon. There we enter upon the celebrated Jornada del Muerto (or journey of the dead man). This is a high tableland between the Sierra del Caballo and Sierra San Andro Mountains, some ninety miles across, and contains no water except a single spring several miles from the road, and a well which an enterprising German made about half way across. The stage, as well as other teams, swing a keg of water under the hind axle, with which to water the teams. Many travelers have perished with thirst in crossing it, and all along the road, glistening in the moonlight were the bones of scores of animals that had

perished on the way. We were from three o'clock one afternoon until one o'clock the next afternoon in crossing. And for miles we rode through water. The whole plain which had once been the terror of man and beast on account of no water was now one vast marshy lake. The stars and stripes floating over Fort Seldon were a welcome sight.

As we advanced southward the cactus had been increasing in size and variety. The candlestick cactus, seen in Colorado, down in New Mexico grew in bunches sometimes ten feet high and six to ten feet in diameter, the whole cluster being covered with a mass of bright scarlet flowers. The soap weed, the roots of which make a lather preferable to soap for washing woolens, here grows into a tree ten and fifteen feet high and six and ten inches through, throwing out at the top its cluster of spike-tipped leaves. One low, turnip shaped cactus holds in the thick skin a juice that quenches thirst; American aloe also abounded, out of which is made an intoxicating brandy. There were also cacti that threw up slender limbs from ten to fifteen feet high and about one inch in diameter. There were quantities of Mesquite, the wood of which has a fine grain and resembles black walnut, is very durable and makes an intense heat. Twelve feet square, around one of these bushes, will yield a cord of wood in the roots.

At dusk we reached Las Cruces, the chief commercial point of Southern New Mexico. The following morning we were again on our way. A few miles brought us to Mesilla, established on the bank of the Rio Grande. This is great fruit country; apples, pears, peaches, plums and apricots abound, while there are miles and miles of vineyards, for this is the great El Paso grape region. Leaving Mesilla, two Mexicans were hired to wade across the Rio Grande, and thus pilot the stage. One of our passengers had just come across Texas, they had been attacked by Comanches, and had lost eight oxen. We were now on the first great overland route to California. We were 1,200 miles from St. Louis, and 1,200 miles from San Francisco. The stages ran this nearly 3,000 miles, across mountains, deserts and dangerous rivers, in twenty-one days and with such regularity that during twelve months there was not a single failure to deliver the mail on schedule time and every day for two winter months, at the middle of this long route, the stages from San Francisco met those from St. Louis within 300 yards of the same place.

We are now in the Apache country, where two years ago it was no uncommon thing for the coach to be attacked and passengers murdered. We passed Fort Ganning, now a dismantled post, in the night. Watered our mules at the spring where Baugus, a celebrated chief of the Apache, was betrayed and murdered. (This murder cost the lives of 500 Americans, who were one by one murdered in retaliation.) Changed the mails at Fort Bauard, and at one in the afternoon reached the objective point of our journey, Silver City.

This is the grand center of New Mexican silver mining, and farther distant from a railroad than any large village in the United States, the nearest railway being 750 miles distant. It is the only purely American city in New Mexico, and consequently shows more comfortable houses and more thrift. There are about 1,000 people there now. Rev. W. W. Curtis is the only Protestant missionary for a tract of country nearly 300 miles square, as a country as large as New York and Pennsylvania.

Taking saddle horses, in company with Bro. Curtis, we made the ascent of Mount Pinos Altos in the main range between the Atlantic and Pacific. To the southwest was the valley of the Gila River, one of Bro. Curtis' preaching stations, to the southeast beyond the horizon was Austin, and Bishop Wright, our nearest neighbor, (750 miles) in that direction. Off to the north are the celebrated San Rita copper mines. All around us were the lurking places of treacherous Apaches, and the many lonely unknown graves in those ravines marked the spot where some one was slain and no tidings ever reached the eastern home, where sorrowing friends waited and watched in vain. At Silver City our stay was all too short, the court that was in session very kindly adjourned that we might have the room for preaching.

All whom we met testified as to the acceptability and efficiency of Mr. Curtis, and his influence extends to the communities a hundred miles around. Upon our return trip, a Sabbath was spent at Las Cruces and Mesilla, and a service held with thirty or forty Americans, who are as sheep without a shepherd. Dr. Hentzleman and his wife, who have had years of adventure in Old Mexico, Arizona and New Mexico, gave us delightful entertainment and a deeper insight into the heathenism of Mexicans who, under the influence of the Baptist mission years ago, became Protestants, and then were left for years and are still without spiritual guides. One of them through an interpreter made a most piteous and feeling plea for a missionary. Another, who could not understand a word of English, sent for me to pray with her, saying that if she could not understand what I said, yet God could, and that was sufficient. How long, oh how long before the American Church will arise and show herself deeply in earnest to give the gospel to these baptized heathen on her own borders! New Mexico has 100,000 American citizens, of whom not more than one in thirty can read or write their own names, and a large majority of whom are sunk in the most abject superstition. They already have the ballot. Shall they have the gospel? They are knocking at the door of Congress to be admitted into the sisterhood of States. Shall they be evangelized? Reader are you doing all you can to help?

Seven days and six nights more, and we were safely at home, having been twenty-four days and fifteen nights in the stage on saddle.

AUGUST, 1877

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Friday, June 8th, we took the stage at the eastern base of the Sangre-de Christo Mountains in the midst of a blinding snowstorm. Up and up the mountain side we crept, the snow becoming deeper and deeper, and the precipices along which we were riding higher. The messenger walked before the horses to find the road, and the over-hanging branches of the trees, bent down with the snow, caught in the reins of the leaders on our six horse team and came near throwing us down the mountainside. By noon, however, we had passed over the summit, 10,000 feet above sea level, and a few hours later passed out of the storm in San Lue's Park. 10 o'clock P.M. brought us to Del Norte, the bishopric of the irrepressible Alex M. Darley. Here the Rio Grande Del Norte comes out from its mountains walls.

Proceeding up the valley of the Rio Grande, we reach Clear Creek Station for breakfast. Twelve hours of staging since the last meal gives an appetite. Near this station are a beautiful series of waterfalls. After breakfast we change our covered coach to a lumber wagon, and commence the ascent of the main range, crossing the summit amid snow and mud at an elevation of 12,000 feet. It was with difficulty that four powerful horses could draw the lumber wagon through, and several times the passengers sprang out to escape being thrown out. The whole way was strewn with broken wagons and dead horses and mules. But there is end of all things, and so we finally, toward evening, rode into the busy, thriving, Lake City, the commercial metropolis of the San Juan mining region. It is a growing village of 2,000 people, situated at the confluence of the Lake Fork and Gunnison River.

The scenery about Lake City is delightful, and is remarkable for its deep canyons, picturesque waterfalls and floral attractions. High mountains rise upon the east and west sides, the altitude of Lake City is 8,400 feet. The first church organization and first church building in Lake City as well as all the San Juan County was the Presbyterian. The organization was effected by the frequent trips of Rev. Alex M. Darley from his home a hundred miles away, trips that involved great hardship, some personal danger, and expenses that have left him still in debt, upon which he is compelled to pay interest at the rate of twenty-four per cent.

The church building was erected largely by the labors of Rev. Geo. M. Darley, missionary in charge. Day after day he toiled on the building from 5 A.M. to 9 P.M. as long as he could see to work—until three times he was laid aside by mountain fever, and then lay in his little log cabin tossing on a bed of shavings with his boots for a pillow. Little does the Church at large realize the sufferings, hardships and perils incident to church work at the forefront.

Last season a new settlement started up to the west of Lake City. It was the extreme settlement toward Utah. As it flourished, appeals were sent out for ministers. The Presbyterian Church, the pioneer Church of the Rocky Mountains, often in advance of their zealous Methodist brethren, read the appeal, and I requested Rev. Geo. M. Darley, of Lake City to visit them as early as possible. To know duty is to attempt its discharge with Mr. Darley. Finding a young printer that wanted to go to Ouray, they procured a burro to carry their blankets and provisions, and started out on foot, March 29. The snow was from one to five feet deep, and the distance of 125 miles through a wilderness without an inhabitant except at the Ute Indian Agency. The first day they walked twenty-five miles, reaching a deserted log cabin. During the day the tin plates and coffee pot were lost from the burro. And the third day, the bread by constant jolting upon the burro had become so fine as to necessitate eating with a spoon, while the snow storms were so continuous, that much of the way they could not find any wood dry enough to make a fire. After a couple of hours of sleep, they were up and on their way at 5 A.M. All that long day they tramped through the snow in the face of a snow storm so severe that they only made fifteen miles. That night they lay down in the snow in a roofless cabin. Unable to sleep in their wet clothes, they arose at midnight and at 3 A.M. started on, making by night thirty-four miles. Lying down in the mud and slush, they were kept awake by the wolves, scenting the provisions and coming so near that the snap of their teeth in the darkness had a most ominous sound. The fourth night, in the midst of a severe snowstorm, they reached the Indian Agency, having had altogether only about three hours' sleep in three nights. Four days and three nights their clothes had been soaking wet and part of the time frozen. Their feet and legs had swollen to twice their natural size, and they were in danger of being permanently crippled. While bathing their limbs with whiskey, an old frontiersman, looking on, thought it a great waste of the whisky.

And now comes the last and hardest day of all. It is twenty-five miles to Ouray, every step of which will be acute pain and torture. In that twenty-five miles the Uncompahgre River, a rushing mountain torrent of ice water, is to be waded twenty-one times. Only able to crawl out of their blankets with great pain, they started on that journey, the horrors of which none can know, that have not been similarly situated. Coming to the river, seizing hold of the ears and tail of the burro, they would throw him off the steep snowbank into the stream, and then plunge in after him. Placing a pole in the rocks below them, they were kept from being swept down by the swift current and thus, waist deep, they waded through the ice water to the farther shore. Another mile through the snow and then another ice bath and thus snow and ice water until 8 P.M., when he reached Ouray, the first minister of the gospel. Pluck always wins in this country, and it is not to be wondered at that the citizens of Ouray, of all denominations, rallied around the blue banner of

Presbyterianism and gave their names for a church organization.

September, 1877

It was to effect that organization that we were on our way to Ouray. The road taken by Mr. Darley, in March, was reported impassable, as the Uncompahgre River was too high to be forded. The only other way was to scale the summit of the mountains, twenty-nine miles on foot. This could be readily done in August, but was considered impracticable on account of snow. Still there was a possibility of success and we concluded to try. Diligent inquiry was made without any encouragement. On that very day thirty miners and mountaineers, accustomed to trials, made the attempt, got lost in the snow and turned back, two of their number being led in snow-blind. The leading elder of the church besought Mr. Darley not to make the attempt, that it was not safe, but our hearts were set on going and we could do no less than make the attempt, and trust God to help us over somehow. After a pleasant Sabbath spent with the little church at Lake and the family of Mr. Darley, Mr. Darley and myself started on Monday morning for Ouray. Taking the stage to Capitol, we rode up the canyon of Henson Creek for ten miles, between lofty rock walls from 100 to 1,000 feet high. By noon we are at Capitol. After a good dinner, we shoulder our blankets and provisions and start on foot up the canyon. All along were beautiful waterfalls and cascades a thousand feet high. Here and there we passed where the avalanche had cut a broad swath down the mountain side, carrying away the trees, both stump and limbs. Five miles up at the edge of the snow line we came to a new log cabin built by Messrs. Smith and Harris. Here we camp for the night. If it shall freeze hard during the night so that we can cross the snow on the crust, they think we can get across, but not otherwise. Earnest prayer is made that He who causes the elements to do His bidding will so control them that we can get across. Eating breakfast of bacon, biscuit and coffee, by half past three we were on our way to get over the crust before the morning sun should soften it. We floundered over the fallen timber in the dark, felt our way over logs across the streams or waded them. In an hour we were at timber line, on an elevation where timber ceases to grow. We now started zigzag up the vast field of frozen snow and ice. The air grew rarer and rarer and breathing became more and more difficult. The wet boots became frozen and the wet feet ached as if they were freezing too. Up and still up we went. Each step the heel of the boot would be driven firmly in the frozen snow, each one trying to step in the dent made by the one that preceded him. A misstep or slip would send the unlucky traveler a whirling down the snow face of the mountain to be dashed in pieces on the rocks below. Every few steps, securing our heels in the snow, we would lay out at full length exhausted, heart thumping, nose bleeding, eyes running and ears ringing. Sometimes the blood is forced from both eyes and ears.

Daylight was approaching and still we were painfully climbing until as the first rays of the morning sun were lighting up a hundred grand mountain peaks around, we gained the summit—13,500 feet. And from that summit what a panorama greeted our eyes! As far as the eye could reach in every direction was a wilderness of peaks, and all covered with snow. Nothing but snow was visible—a Canadian January scene in the middle of June. But it was too cold to tarry and we were soon plunging down the western face of the mountain. Where it was not too steep, we could run down the face of the snow, and where it was too steep for running, we could sit down and slide. And such a slide of a thousand feet at a breakneck speed would be the great event of the season for the average school boy. Between running and sliding we were down in twenty minutes, a distance that on the other side had cost us two hours of painful climbing. Without halting we plunged down the canyon as there was yet considerable snow to be crossed. The descent was rapid and the trail bordered with a constant succession of waterfalls, any one of which would have repaid a trip of hundreds of miles. Soon after reaching timber line the snow ran out, and we had a succession of dry ground, mud, and fording the mountain torrents. We lost the trail and got off into the fallen timber. By the time the trail was found, my feet were so blistered, traveling in wet and at times frozen boots, that I could go no farther. We were in the heart of the mountains, still ten miles from town. It was decided that Mr. Darley should leave the provisions and blankets with me, and then push on to Ouray and send back a horse to carry me in. Building a fire and spreading the blankets, I went to sleep with my feet drying at the fire. Four hours passed away and Mr. Darley returned without the horse. Shortly after leaving me, he had again become lost, and wandering around found himself in the bottom of a deep canyon, where the water of the mountain torrent filled from rock to rock shutting off all farther progress. To extricate himself from that gorge he had climbed great pine trees, that like stairs enabled him to get from one ledge of rock, to another. On his return he had met a miner going to Ouray, and, being too much exhausted to walk in with him, had sent a note informing the Presbyterians of our situation.

After a good rest in camp, a burro pack train came along and we hired our passage into Ouray on the same kind of an animal that the Savior made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Just before reaching the village, we met a party with horses and provisions coming to our relief, and soon after we were safe among friends. An appointment was made for preaching and on the evening of June 13, after

preaching, was organized the First Presbyterian Church of Ouray.

Ouray has a population of about 500, the growth of one year. Many families were still living in tents, unable to procure lumber and build the houses as rapidly as was required by the incoming population. With its beautiful park, its canyon walls, its hot springs and waterfalls, it has the most beautiful situation of any village yet seen in the mountains.

October, 1877

From Ouray we would again cross the summit between the head waters of the Uncompahgre and those of the Animas. Leaving Ouray at 4 P.M., we start on horseback up the canyon of the Uncompahgre to Poughkeepsie Creek. By sundown we reach a grassy knob and camp for the night. The night was too cold and blankets too few to allow sleep, so that most of the time was spent in keeping up the fire. Rising at 2 A.M., our breakfast of coffee, cold roast beef, biscuit and cake, kindly provided by Mrs. Broloski, whose husband was my guide and traveling companion, was soon over, and with early dawn we were on our way. Far above us two mountain sheep watched our small party as we toiled upward. Two or three miles farther and we came to snow line, where we sent our horses back and started over the snow on foot. An hour and a half and we were on the summit, in the very heart of the Rocky Mountains. This range, that breaks down in Montana on the north and New Mexico on the south, here reaches its greatest average height. Here is a land of perpetual snows, feeding five great rivers of the Continent, with their thousands of tributaries. Of that which is grand and inspiring in massive and towering snowclad peaks, there is nothing in the United States or Europe can vie with it.

The divide between Ouray and Silverton is fully a thousand feet lower than that between Ouray and Lake. Still we found it painful climbing. After sunrise we had to blacken our faces with charcoal to prevent becoming snow blind. By 9 A.M., we were over the snow, and reached the small mining town of Animas Forks. Here, getting a cup of coffee, I laid down on a board bench and took a good sleep. At this place I found a Mr. Raymond, a Presbyterian, from Sioux City. Here also I obtained a horse to ride to Silverton, fourteen miles away. In that fourteen miles we crossed with much difficulty and no little danger the snow faces of about fifty avalanches. Last winter, two mail carriers and several other parties were caught and killed by them, and the day after we passed a traveler was caught in a fresh slide, carried half a mile down the mountain, and badly bruised. But the remarkable sight on Henson Creek, on the Uncompahgre and Animas Rivers, was the innumerable waterfalls and cascades.

A few miles below Animas Forks, we pass through the small mining town of Eureka. Four miles below we came to Howardsville, where we procured a good dinner at the hotel. Five miles below we came to Silverton, the county seat of San Juan County, and center of the richest mining district. Silverton is situated in Baker's Park, which is a beautiful little spot of about 2,000 acres. The valley on all sides is surrounded by the most rugged mountains in the whole Sierra Madre range, many of their peaks reaching 11,000 feet. At Silverton on Sabbath I preached to a large congregation at the Town Hall and made arrangements to supply them with preaching. Forty-five miles below Silverton is the flourishing village of Animas City. At Animas City and the surrounding valley are several Presbyterian communicants, and arrangements were made for organizing a church. Twenty-five miles across the West Mountains is San Miguel, a new city sprung up this season. Rev. John McAllister, of Chicago Seminary, is looking after the interest of the church, the only Protestant minister in that whole valley. Silverton is a hard place to reach and equally hard to get out of. But the people of that section are nobly taking hold of the road question, and it will not be many months before they have good roads into that beautiful valley. But the road are not yet, so getting up again at 2 A.M., and eating a hearty breakfast with Mr. Green, the mail carrier, we were off at break of dawn on horseback, driving before us a mule with mail bags. We passed up Cunningham Gulch, and got along very well until we got into the snow. Here meeting a burro pack train, we were detained an hour, which came near detaining us twenty-four more, for the snow became so soft under the morning sun that it was with the greatest difficulty that I got my horse over, and probably would not, had not some Mexicans came along whom I hired to partially carry the horse over the bad places. Sore and hungry, I reached Barber's Ranch, on the Rio Grande, where I found good refreshment.

Starting out at 5 A.M., reached Antelope Springs in time for a good dinner and the coach from Lake City. About 5 P.M., we reach Wagonwheel Gap, so named because a wagon wheel was found here, supposed to have been left by one of Fremont's early expeditions. At this place are extensive springs that are already attracting many visitors. The ordinary mineral springs of the Rocky Mountains rise from canyon rocks; the grass and flowers seeming to die and wither around them. The hot spring of the Wagonwheel is a bowl of ten or twelve feet, sunken in rich meadow whose heavy grass grows into the heated water. The water is strongly sulphur—115 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. There is another spring of cold water and another of soda which the residents sip like coffee. Bathing places are arranged at all the springs and wonderful stories are related of the efficacy of these springs.

The second evening brings us to the welcome railroad again.